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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE  
THEMES:

HEADLINES  
BRIEFING  
EDITORIAL OPINION  
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HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Kurds to Be Given Iraqi Oil and Foreign Ministries - Aksam  
Kurds Want Turkmen Out of Iraq Administration - Hurriyet  
Greek F-16s Harass Turkish Jetfighters Over Aegean -  
Milliyet  
Kemal Dervis is Annan's Nominee for UNDP - Aksam  
World Bank Expects No New Crisis in Turkey - Milliyet  
Kyrgyz Uprising May Turn Into Civil War - Sabah  
School Massacre in US - Turkiye  
Feeding Tube Removed From Schiavo - Sabah

OPINION MAKERS

Iraqi Shiite Leader Issues Warm Messages for Ankara -  
Radikal  
Shiites, Kurds to Compromise in Iraq - Yeni Safak  
Centrist Parties in Europe Shift to Anti-Islam - Zaman  
Tulkarim Under Palestinian Control - Cumhuriyet  
Arab League Calls on Israel to Compromise - Cumhuriyet  
Iran Insists on Nuclear Program - Cumhuriyet  
Thousands of Chechens Missing Under Detention - Yeni Safak  
Annan Warns Against Rising Racist Terror - Yeni Safak  
High-School Frenzy in US - Radikal  
Kyrgyz Unrest Continues - Radikal  
Kazakhstan Expects Turkey's Support for 'Central Asian  
Union' - Zaman

BRIEFING

Military, Government Condemn Attempts to Burn Turkish Flag:  
The Turkish military and government leaders condemned the  
burning of the Turkish flag by Kurdish protesters in  
Turkey's southern port city of Mersin on Sunday during  
celebrations of the Nevruz festival. A group of Kurds  
chanted slogans for the release of PKK leader Abdullah  
Ocalan and attempted to burn the Turkish flag. Six people  
were hurt in clashes with police and 18 others were  
arrested. The Turkish General Staff (TGS) strongly  
condemned the action, calling it 'traitorous': 'This  
country's unity and the Turkish flag, a symbol of that  
unity, will never be left unprotected,' the TGS said in a  
written statement. The military is losing patience and was  
'forced' to respond to the incident after the government had  
said nothing for two days, "Milliyet" comments. PM Tayyip  
Erdogan said from Brussels where he was meeting with EU  
leaders that prosecutors had launched an investigation into  
the incident. Former Democracy Party (DEP) lawmaker Leyla  
Zana also condemned the flag burning: 'We have to show  
respect for the country's shared values. The flag, for  
which lives are sacrificed, is the most important value,'  
Zana said. Pro-Kurdish Democratic People's Party (DEHAP)  
Tuncer Bakirhan condemned the 'provocation', and said the  
Turkish flag is the flag of the Kurds as well.

Erdogan Attends EU Meetings in Brussels: PM Tayyip Erdogan  
said after attending meetings of the European People's  
Parties (EPP) in Brussels that Turkey will keep its promise  
to sign the additional protocol of the Ankara Agreement  
which includes Cyprus in Turkey's customs union agreement  
with the EU. Erdogan said he had discussed tourism and  
energy cooperation with Greek PM Karamanlis. Erdogan also  
rejected criticism that Turkey has slowed its progress in  
the European reform process.

OIC Ambassadors Pay 'Secret' Visit to Turkish Cyprus: The  
ambassadors of 8 countries of the Organization of Islamic  
Conference (OIC) paid a discreet visit to northern Cyprus  
March 11-14 at the invitation of the Turkish Cypriot  
ambassador to Ankara, "Radikal" reports. Envoys from  
Malaysia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Oman, Libya,

Bangladesh and Afghanistan met with Turkish Cypriot leaders Mehmet Ali Talat and Serdar Denktas during their visit. Greece attempted to block the visit, and Nicosia sent protest notes to countries that allowed their envoys to visit the Turkish Cypriot statelet in the north.

**Denktas Says Will Leave Post Over Differences With AKP:** Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktas said he is leaving his post because of differences with Turkey's ruling AK Party, "Milliyet" writes. Denktas said it is the first time he has not been in agreement with a Turkish government. Denktas accused the Turkish government of being 'insensitive' to the Turkish people's feelings about Cyprus, and noted that he would establish a civilian organization in north Cyprus to unite Turks.

**Iraqi Shiite Leader in Turkey:** Ammar al-Hakim, son of the Iraqi Shiite leader Abdulaziz al-Hakim (SCIRI) said that an Iraqi government representing all sects and ethnicities in the country will deal a serious blow to terrorism. Hakim came to Istanbul as the guest of the Turkish Foreign Ministry. He told a press conference on Tuesday that the Kirkuk question will be discussed in the new Iraqi parliament. 'We are against the forceful deportation of people from Kirkuk,' Hakim stressed. He said that PUK leader Talabani is a 'strong candidate' for Iraq president. Hakim said that the Americans' pledge to leave Iraq is ambiguous, since 'we don't know when security will be achieved' in the country. Hakim added that Iraqi officials should have the final say on this issue. Hakim criticized the killing of women and children by insurgents 'who claim to be acting in the name of Islam.' 'Celebrations by some groups after deadly attacks do not display the real character of Muslims,' Hakim emphasized. He claimed that such attacks are intended to increase tension between the Shiites and Sunnis in Iraq, and also help to extend the presence of foreign troops. Hakim slammed some of Iraq's neighbors for remaining silent in the face of terrorist attacks. 'Iraq is in a very difficult position,' Hakim noted, and he urged Turkey to do all it can to help the Iraqis.

**Dervis a Candidate for UNDP Administrator:** Candidates from Kuwait, Britain, Turkey, Japan, Norway and the Netherlands are in the running to head the UN Development Program (UNDP), the UN's largest agency with an annual budget of nearly \$3 billion, papers report. The candidate from Turkey is Kemal Dervis, a member of parliament, a former minister of economic affairs, and a former World Bank vice president.

**EDITORIAL OPINION: Iraq's Second Anniversary; EU Constitution**

"Scenes From An Occupation"

Mete Cubukcu commented in the leftist "Birgun" (3/23): "Iraq does not present us with a promising picture on the second anniversary of the occupation. The cost has been more than 100,000 deaths and over 300 billion dollars. And today, Iraq continues to suffer from a lack of fuel and unbearable daily shortages, as well as from the ongoing resistance. This is one side of the picture. On the other side, there is an election process that was hailed as a big achievement even though nobody has yet figured how the voting took place. There is ongoing bargaining about the composition of the new administration, as religious fundamentalist Shiites try to reach a deal with the Kurds, who advocate a kind of federalism. In sum, neither the Americans nor the Iraqis are happy on the second anniversary of the occupation. Because of all the chaos and uncertainty, the people of Iraq are struggling to survive and are forced to focus on meeting their daily needs rather than thinking about policies for the future of the country."

"France is Determined to Say No"

Kamuran Ozbir wrote in the nationalist "Ortadogu" (3/23): "The possibility that France could reject European Constitution has the potential to create a real earthquake in the EU. In this sense, the vote in France will be more important than similar referenda to be held in other EU countries. France is still the champion of the European ideal as well as the driving force behind the union. If French voters prefer to say no to this constitution, a disastrous effect will be seen both in French domestic politics and in the EU. . The issue has a very important 'Turkey dimension' as well. Those who advocate a vote against the European Constitution in France are raising the fear of Turkish EU membership to bolster their case. Turkey has now become an object of fear in France. The number of opponents of the constitution is on the rise partly because of the view that a 'no' to the constitution also means a 'no' to Turkey."

"Let Us Continue at Full Speed"

Sami Kohen commented in the mass appeal "Milliyet" (3/23): "There have been recent claims that the AKP government has lost its enthusiasm for EU entry. At least the signing of

the additional protocol for Cyprus would allow the government to overcome this important problem. Nevertheless, it shouldn't be forgotten that the protocol has to be submitted to the Turkish Parliament for approval, and that there is no guarantee that the Parliament is going to support this agreement. The issue has now become a serious concern for the government. If we accept that there is stagnation on the part of the AKP government, the EU is partly to blame as well. After the December 17 summit, EU leaders also seemed to lose their enthusiasm for Turkey's membership. They do not want to bring Turkey's EU entry on to the agenda until the EU referendum in France in May. EU officials who criticize Turkey for slowing down the process should also keep this in mind. In any case, Turkey should continue to move toward the EU at full speed."

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